



Item 5

**University Affairs Board 2005-06
Vice-Provost, Students' Report # 2**

International Student Centre held a lunch for students on Christmas Day which saw 50 students attending. The event was a huge success and the students were most appreciative of the staff taking time out of their own Christmas celebrations to host the lunch.

The initial phase of the **Student Portal** project is done. In November, the new Student Web architecture was unveiled with the new U of T home page collection. The Student site is prominent in the redesign and has received positive feedback from students. Much of this was due to the time spent listening to students, faculty and staff over the last year, and incorporating feedback into the architecture.

Phase 1 accomplished much in the way of re-organising the presentation of information around the life cycle of a student at the University rather than around the organisational structure. Phase 1 resolved many of the Find:Get:Do objectives of the portal project.

The next phase of the project moves deeply into personalising the content and messaging and providing a broader set of services to students.

Concurrent with the portal project was a search for a Learning Management System. Learning management systems facilitate the organisation of course-related material, student collaboration, student-faculty communication, and administrative tasks around a common platform and interface. The LMS working group realised that LMS' and portals had many similarities of function and purpose. Co-ordination of the student portal and LMS initiatives commenced, and the end-result was the selection of an LMS with an integrated portal — the BlackBoard Academic Suite. The BlackBoard Academic Suite has three primary components:

1. Learning Management System - course content, class management, quizzing, grading, messaging;
2. Community System - personalised communication, discussion boards, clubs, document and project collaboration, forming and managing groups, e-commerce - building communities;
3. Content System - syndicating and repurposing content; document management.

The Community System is the portal interface. It is the personal space for a student containing the content they want to see organised in the way they find most appropriate. It is role-based, that is, services and content are made available based on the role or roles a person has in the University community. The Community System provides the framework for deploying single (or reduced) sign-on to University systems and services.

Hart House Update:

1. World University Debating Championships

The Hart House Debating Club/Debates Committee had a stellar showing at the WUDC 2006. We sent four teams to the tournament, all of whom made the octo-finals, three of whom made the quarter finals. The Hart House team of Joanna Nairn and Michael Kotrly won the tournament, competing against 324 teams from more than 40 nations. Michael is a third year law student and Joanna is in her final year of Political Science. They competed against teams from Yale, University of Chicago and Inner Temple in the final round.

The tournament is the largest non-athletic international student competition in the world. This year it was hosted by University College in Dublin from December 27 – January 3. The Hart House debaters have consistently maintained their presence on the international debating scene. Ranked as one of the top 10 schools of all time at Worlds, Hart House debaters have reliably reached elimination rounds year in and year out.

Joanna and Michael also made the Grand Finals at Worlds in 2005, competing against Oxford, Cambridge and the University of Ottawa.

2. Accessible Events Planning

Working with Julia Munk of the U of T Access Centre, two workshops on planning accessible events will be offered to interested U of T students, particularly those who have leadership roles in campus groups. The workshops are scheduled for January 17, 5:30 - 7pm and January 18, 12 - 1:30 pm. The workshops are designed both to raise awareness about issues of accessibility, and to provide information about strategies and resources for planning accessible events. Each participant will also receive a copy of the new guide to an accessible U of T which is being produced by Students for Barrier Free Access and the Access Centre.

3. Federal Election

The Hart House Debates Committee and the Hart House Social Justice Committee are working with two non-partisan national youth organizations (Canada 25 and Get Your Vote On) to deliver a variety of pre-election programming designed to encourage voter turnout among youth, to educate students on the process of voting, and to provide opportunities for potential voters to learn more about the various party platforms.

- January 10/12 - Get Your Vote On and the Social Justice Committee will be tabling at Sid Smith, doing voter education and handing out voter information cards
- January 11/18 - The Social Justice Committee will use the Hart House \$5 buck lunches to distribute voter information cards.
- January 16 - 6:30-8:30 pm All Candidates Forum featuring all of the candidates for Trinity-Spadina, U of T's main riding.
- January 18 – 2:00-4:00 pm Partisan affiliated on-campus groups (U of T NDP, Greens, Conservatives, Liberals etc), have been invited to Hart House's weekly Buzzword to talk to interested students about the various platforms.

For more information on the groups we are working with and on the National Day of Awareness on Youth Voting, you can visit the web site for Get Your Vote On <www.getyourvoteon.ca> or Canada25 <www.canada25.com>. Both of these organizations are part of a national coalition of groups trying to encourage voters under 30 to exercise their franchise. For more information on the coalition, you can visit "govote.ca"